



Environmental News

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EPA AWARDS \$2 MILLION TO SEVEN STATES FOR NEW BROWNFIELDS JOB TRAINING GRANTS IN TEN COMMUNITIES

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In its ongoing efforts to promote economic revitalization and safeguard the environment and public health, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman today announced the awarding of the first Brownfields Job Training grants under the new Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2002. EPA is awarding ten communities in seven states \$200,000 each to provide environmental job training at Brownfields sites. Whitman made the announcement today during a visit to one of the award recipients, JFY Networks (formerly Jobs for Youth) in Boston.

“By training people to address their local Brownfields, we are not only helping to develop the skills needed to reclaim this land for the community, we are also training the next generation of environmental professionals,” said Whitman. “This is a great program — one that builds new partnerships for environmental progress, so that our children and grandchildren can live in a cleaner and healthier America.”

In January 2002, President Bush signed into law the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, which authorizes up to \$250 million per year for Brownfields grants, including up to \$50 million for the assessment and cleanup of low-risk petroleum contaminated sites. The new legislation allows EPA to provide training to expedite assessment, remediation and preparation of Brownfields sites.

The job training grants are used to teach environmental-cleanup job skills to individuals living in low-income areas near Brownfields sites. The majority of participants who successfully complete the training program go on to pursue careers with environmental firms and organizations. Since the job training program started in 1998, EPA has awarded 56 job training pilots totaling \$10.7 million; 1366 participants have completed training; and 903 participants have obtained employment in the environmental field with an average hourly wage of \$12.55. Applicants for the Job Training program must be located in or near a community that currently receives, or has received, financial assistance from EPA for Brownfields-related activities.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Since its inception in 1995, the Brownfields Program, including today’s announcement, has awarded 645 grants to assess Brownfields sites and to make loans to conduct cleanups. To date, EPA’s Brownfields assistance has leveraged more than \$4.6 billion in private investment, helped create more than 20,000 jobs and has resulted in the assessment of more than 4,000 properties. Every acre of reclaimed Brownfields saves 4.5 acres of greenspace such as park and recreation areas.

Below is a summary of each grant recipient and their plans to use the grants.

2003 Brownfields Job Training Grants

JFY Networks, Boston, Mass.

Plans to train 60 participants, achieve an 80 percent placement rate, and track graduates for two years to ensure job retention and career growth. The 460-hour training program will focus on environmental chemistry, site assessment, and hazardous waste handling.

Middlesex Community College, Central Connecticut, Conn.

Plans to train 50 students, achieve an 82 percent placement rate, and track graduates for 18 months after job placement. The target participants will be underemployed or unemployed residents of nine Central Connecticut communities. Placement in environmental jobs will be accomplished through the Community College's existing relationships with the many technical employers in the area.

Coalition for a Better Acre, Lowell, Mass.

Expects to provide training to 48 residents, achieve a 83 percent placement rate, and track students for a year. The 256-hour training program will include hazardous material handling, environmental site assessment, environmental sampling of soil and water, and asbestos inspection. Students will be recruited from among low-income residents of the Lowell Enterprise Community.

The WorkPlace, Inc., Southwest Connecticut, Conn.

Plans to train 54 students, achieve a 83 percent placement rate, and track graduates for one year. Students will be recruited from communities with high unemployment and poverty rates. The Workplace, Inc. serves as the workforce investment board for Southwest Connecticut and will ensure placement of graduates in environmental jobs.

Camden, N.J.

Camden plans to train 50 students, achieve a 90 percent placement rate, and track students for one year. The training program will consist of 150 hours of site assessment, lead abatement, and asbestos abatement courses. This will be followed by 120 hours of internships with local environmental employers and mentoring by neighborhood residents. Students will be recruited from Camden, with emphasis on unemployed and unskilled minority residents.

Saint Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, New York, N.Y.

Plans to train 80 students, achieve a 70 percent placement rate in environment-related jobs, and track students for two years. The 250-hour training program will include hazardous materials handling, lead abatement, and asbestos air sampling and abatement. Students will be recruited from disadvantaged residents of North Brooklyn and placed in environmentally related jobs by Williamsburg Works, the workforce development arm of Saint Nicholas.

New Jersey Youth Corps, Phillipsburg and Newark, N.J.

Plans to train 50 students, achieve an 80 percent placement rate, and track graduates for two to five years. The training program will include hazardous materials handling and phytoremediation (cleanup of plant life). Students will be unemployed or underemployed youth from Phillipsburg and Newark.

The Oklahoma City Office of Workforce Development plans to train 110 participants, achieving a 70 percent placement rate, and track students for one year. The training program will consist of seven 80-hour training cycles covering hazardous materials handling and methamphetamine lab remediation. Candidates will be recruited from residents of the city's Empowerment Zone.

Fort Belknap Indian Community, Mont.

The Fort Belknap Indian Community and its partners plan to train 60 students, achieve a 70 percent placement rate, and track students for one year. The two-year, 370-hour training program consists of seven courses in a hazardous waste track offered during the first year of the program and eight courses in a remediation/ecosystem track offered during the second year. Students will include local residents of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, and will be assisted in finding employment by the Tribal Employment Rights Opportunity (TERO) training program.

Los Angeles, Calif.

The Los Angeles Community Development Department plans to train 50 students, achieve an 80 percent placement rate, and track students for a full year. The seven-week, 300-hour job training program will consist of hazardous waste handling, innovative environmental technologies, lead abatement, and asbestos abatement. Recruitment will focus on low-income residents of the city's federal Empowerment Zone and five state Enterprise Zones. Placement will be conducted by the city's WorkSource Centers.

For more information go to: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>